



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: July 21, 2010 REPORT NO. 10-108
ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of July 28, 2010
SUBJECT: San Diego Police Department Homeless Outreach Team

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

The San Diego Police Department presents an annual report to the Committee on the Homeless Outreach Team.

In 1999, the San Diego Police Department Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) originated as a problem solving effort to assist patrol officers with community disorder created by chronic homelessness.

The HOT was initially funded with 50,000 dollars from the City of San Diego Downtown Partnership. The program has been operating each fiscal year until Fiscal Year 09/10 with 50,000 dollars from the City of San Diego and 99,000 dollars from the Police Department. This money funded the team's two PERT Clinicians.

In 1999, the City of San Diego's Emergency Medical Director Dr. Jim Dunford published a report documenting 15 of San Diego's chronic alcoholics costing the City and County about 1.5 million dollars in unreimbursed medical care.

In 2000, in response to Dr. Dunford's report, the Serial Inebriate Program (SIP) began as a pilot program to assist the police department with the criminal prosecution of chronic inebriates.

In 2001, the County and City of San Diego were satisfied with initial SIP outcomes. The County of San Diego provided Tobacco Settlement funds to operate the program for 3 years. Mental Health Systems became the program's funded treatment provider.

In 2002, St. Vincent de Paul Village Health Center received private funding and became the SIP medical case manager.

In 2003, the United States Interagency on Homelessness and HUD selected 10 programs in the United States as “best practices” for successfully diverting chronic homeless individuals off the street and into available housing or treatment programs. SIP and HOT were 2 of the 10.

In 2004, SIP received annual funding of 200,000 dollars from the City and County of San Diego. The City Housing Commission provided 80,000 dollars for sober living housing and the County provided 120,000 dollars for treatment.

In 2008, the County of San Diego Alcohol and Drug Services increased SIP treatment funding from 120,000 dollars to 148,500 dollars.

In 2010, the Serial Inebriate Program was funded by the City and County for a total of 212,500 dollars.

DISCUSSION

The San Diego region homeless are categorized into two subgroups called chronic homelessness and situational homelessness. The Regional Task Force for the Homeless estimates about 25% of the regions homeless are considered chronically homeless. The vast majority of the chronically homeless live in the City of San Diego’s Downtown, Hillcrest, Midway/Rosecrans, North Park, Beach Areas, and La Jolla.

The Homeless Outreach Team works primarily with individuals suffering from chronic homelessness. It is a multi-disciplinary team with partnerships between law enforcement, City of San Diego Emergency Medical Services, the Superior Courts, County Alcohol and Drug Services, County Mental Health Services, County Health and Human Services Agency, local homeless service providers, area hospitals, and numerous community agencies.

The Team consists of 4 San Diego Police Officers, 2 Psychiatric Emergency Response Team Clinicians (PERT), and 2 County of San Diego Health and Human Service (HHSA) Specialists. The HOT is funded by the Police Department (\$99,000), and County of San Diego Mental Health Services Act money (\$104,000). Private donations from the San Diego Police Foundation assist the team with emergency housing vouchers.

The County of San Diego supports the team with “in-kind” services of the 2 HHSA Specialists. The HHSA and PERT partnerships provides the team with the ability to make facilitated placements into many county funded mental health and substance abuse treatment programs.

One San Diego Police Department Sergeant supervises the team’s day-to-day activity. The Homeless Outreach Team is comprised of three components. These components are outreach teams, the Serial Inebriate Program, and an enforcement element.

OUTREACH TEAMS

There are two outreach teams on the streets Monday-Friday from 5:30AM to 3:30PM. A team consists of one police officer, one PERT clinician, and one HHSA Specialist. These teams do limited enforcement as their primary function is to develop relationships with the homeless and provide voluntary outreach to the chronic homeless population. They take referrals from police

officers, community members, City Council, and the Superior Courts. Staffing permitted there is at least one Outreach Team at the City Concourse Public Bathrooms Monday-Friday from 6:30AM-8AM.

These two teams contacted about 1000 people this fiscal year and made about 400 placements.

SERIAL INEBRIATE PROGRAM

The Serial Inebriate Program is a post sentencing program using alternative sentencing for the charge of drunk in public in an effort to divert the clients into county funded treatment. The concept is similar to the Drug Court Model.

The goals of the Serial Inebriate Program are to stop or slow the “revolving door” of chronic inebriates going in and out of jail, the sobering center, and area hospitals because of alcohol intoxication. The program provides county funded treatment in lieu of any court imposed custody time.

The Sobering Center, operated by the Volunteers of America, identifies all program participants. Individuals transported to the Sobering Center by the San Diego Police Department five or more times in a thirty day period will be rejected from the facility as a chronic offender. The arresting police officer will then book the individual into County Jail under arrest for drunk in public.

Once in jail the City Attorney’s Neighborhood Prosecution Unit prosecutes the case. If convicted and sentenced to any custody time the individual will be offered treatment in lieu of custody.

The SIP consists of 1 San Diego Police Officer managing the program’s day-to-day operations. This officer makes sure all arrest documentation is complete and liaisons with the Superior Courts.

SIP funding is a collaborative effort between the City and County of San Diego.

The City of San Diego Housing Commission funds:

- \$64,000 per year
- Sober living housing

The County of San Diego Alcohol and Drug Services funds:

- \$148,500 per year
- Treatment

For fiscal year 2009-2010, SIP case managed 250 chronic alcoholics arrested for drunk in public.

Mental Health Systems Inc. is the County/City funded provider and provides

- Case management
- Jail assessments
- Sober Living Beds
- Treatment

St. Vincent de Paul Medical Center is the program medical case manager and provides a medical home for all SIP participants.


ENFORCEMENT

The HOT often received calls from city departments asking for help with homeless issues. Because of this the team has assigned one police officer to liaison with the City of San Diego Code Enforcement Unit, Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, Open Space, Cal Trans, and the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit Code Enforcement Section.

CONCLUSION

The Homeless Outreach Team has been recognized throughout the United States as an excellent program. The partnerships created between the County, City, and community has enabled police officers on the street to effectively work with the underserved chronic homeless population.

Respectfully submitted,



William M. Lansdowne
Chief of Police